

In the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

(Amended) 10. A method for manufacturing an optical fiber preform, comprising the steps of:

- A²
- a) heating a consolidated optical fiber preform within a chamber of a heating furnace having a first temperature profile to allow a gob to drop under the influence of heat and gravity,
 - b) removing additional glass from the preform in the heating furnace until a draw tip having a pre-optimized tip shape is formed, and
 - c) transferring the preform to a draw furnace of a draw apparatus wherein a second temperature profile within the draw furnace is substantially identical to the first temperature profile.

Please cancel Claim 11 without prejudice or disclaimer.

~~ab31~~ (Amended) 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the step of heating is accomplished by at least one induction coil surrounding the preform.

A³ (Amended) 13. The method of claim 10 wherein the pre-optimized shape includes a tip taper having a ratio, defined as tip length divided by radius change over the tip length, of between about 5 to about 12.

(Amended) 14. The method of claim 10 wherein the pre-optimized shape includes a tip taper having a ratio, defined as tip length divided by radius change over the tip length, of between about 6 to about 9.

(Amended) 15. The system of Claim 10 wherein the heating furnace includes a temperature between about 1800 °C and 2000 °C.

(Amended) 16. The system of Claim 10 wherein the heating furnace includes a temperature between about 1900 °C and 1950 °C.